Promoting the Application of Fire Ecology through Science and Education
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GLOBAL WARMING FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL FIRE CONGRESS
THOUSANDS OF FIRE PROFESSIONALS TO GATHER IN SAN DIEGO

For immediate release

San Diego__Global warming is changing fire behavior, creating longer fire seasons, and causing more frequent, large-scale, high-severity wildfires that threaten homes and communities, according to sponsors of the Third International Fire Ecology and Management Congress to be held in San Diego on November 13–17, 2006.

"The largest gathering of fire professionals in history will address these problems," said Robin Wills of Chico, Calif., President of the Association for Fire Ecology (AFE), the sponsor of the Fire Congress. "We expect attendance around 3,000. We'll look at the impacts of global warming upon everyone from contractors to landscapers, homeowners to insurance brokers, and local fire districts to national governments," Wills said.

"Human-induced climate change and wildland fire management are multi-faceted and span many disciplines," said Wills. "Planning for wildfire requires a staggering amount of cooperation and communication between diverse groups. We're going to bring these groups together this fall in San Diego."

All those interested in the interrelationship between wildfires and global warming are encouraged to attend the Fire Congress, according to AFE board member Timothy Ingalsbee of Eugene, Ore. "We expect journalists, government representatives, fire managers, resource professionals, scientists, landowners, realtors, consultants, contractors, educators and students to attend," said Ingalsbee.

Ingalsbee said wildland fire has historically shaped many landscapes and is essential for the survival of many plants and animals. Continued attempts to exclude wildland fire pose significant risks, costs, and impacts to firefighters, taxpayers, and the environment, he said.

The Fire Congress will consist of lectures, field trips, workshops, posters, papers, and exhibits that showcase new products, technology, and tools on the leading edge of international fire science and fire policy. The Congress's official website is http://emmps.wsu.edu/firecongress . Registration is available at: http://emmps.wsu.edu/firecongress/register.html .

Fire ecology expert and Fire Congress Chair Melanie Miller of Missoula, Mont. said, "The diversity of ecosystems and fire regimes requires a diversity of fire management practices. Fire ecology can help communities living in fire-prone environments learn how to live with fire. We, as a global community, need to push forward to learn more about global warming, fire science, and their effects on ecosystems, people and communities."

Plenary sessions include Monday, Nov. 13, Dr. Richard Alley, Evan Pugh Professor of Geosciences at Pennsylvania State University, presenting "Preparing to Be Surprised: Causes and Consequences of Abrupt Climate Change" and Dr. Tim Barnett, Research Marine Physicist at Scripps Institute of Oceanography at San Diego State University, presenting "Future Climate of Planet Earth: A Sneak Preview."

Wednesday, Nov.15, plenary sessions will focus on the consequences of changing fire regimes in four geographic regions of the world: Australia (Dr. Ross Bradstock of Hurstville, New South Wales, Australia); Amazon Basin (Dr. Mark Cochrane of Brookings, South Dakota, USA); Boreal Regions (Dr. Mike Flannigan of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada), and Western United States (Dr. Tom Swetnam of Tucson, Arizona, USA). Dr. Stephen Pyne will provide a worldwide overview. In addition, Dr. William J. Bond of Rondebosch, South Africa will address "Fitting Fire into Global Ecology." A closing panel will address the question: "How will Global Climate Change Influence Fire and Land Management Programs and Policies?"

The Association for Fire Ecology (AFE) is an organization of professionals dedicated to improving the knowledge and use of fire ecology in land management. Utilizing annual conferences, an on-line journal and selected publications, AFE continues to heighten awareness of the role of fire in contemporary ecosystems. For more information, go to: http://www.fireecology.net .

"Since global warming is creating longer fire seasons and causing more frequent large-scale wildfires, we must now change land management to mitigate the effects of ongoing climate change," Ingalsbee said. "To this end, a Wildland Fire and Climate Change Declaration is now being circulated and will be officially endorsed by the Third International Fire Ecology and Management Congress," he said.

The Nov. 13 – 17, 2006, Third International Fire Ecology and Management Congress is located at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, located at 500 Hotel Circle North; San Diego, CA 92108; (Ph): 619-291-7131, (Fax): 619-294-5957; www.towncountry.com/ .

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Ingalsbee said the group's scientists are eager to talk with the public: "We can put you in touch with the world's leading fire ecology experts and researchers. Just give us a call, or drop us an e-mail."

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SPECIAL SESSIONS –
THIRD INTERNATIONAL FIRE ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT CONGRESS:

Scientists from around the world are contributing to the November 13–17, 2006, Third International Fire Ecology and Management Congress in San Diego. 486 papers and 120 posters will be officially presented, including 250 papers to be received in the following special sessions:

- 2003 Southern California fires: Science insights into the fire event and recovery (Dr. Jon Keeley, convener).
- Advances in fire climatology: Using modern and paleofire data to understand long-term and broad-scale fire regime changes in western North America (Dr. Thomas Swetnam, convener).
- Air quality regulations and wildland fire: Issues and challenges (Pete Lahm, convener).
- Applications of remotely sensed burned area and severity data (Dr. Andrea Thode, convener).
- Big fires: Disaster or diversity? (Dr. Dick Williams, convener).
- California and Australian Aboriginal burning practices and contemporary fire management: Restoration of culturally significant habitats (Frank K. Lake, PhD candidate, convener).
- Changing fire dynamics and ecosystem responses in tropical vegetation (Dr. Mark A. Cochrane, convener).
- Changing spatiotemporal dynamics of fire regimes in the Appalachian Mountains (Dr. Charles Lafon, convener).
- Do past management activities compound the effects of fire exclusion in Western forests? (Dr. Anna Sala, convener).
- Effects of fire and fire surrogate treatments for ecological restoration: A national perspective (Dr. Scott Stephens, convener).
- Engaging professionals in reducing future risks, after large property losses in 2003 wildfires in San Diego (Dr. Anne Fege, convener).
- Fire and dynamics of arid and semi-arid landscapes (Dr. Peter Weisberg, convener).
- Fire and nonnative invasive plants (Jane Kapler Smith, convener).
- Fire ecology and fuels management collaboration: The good, the bad, and the ugly (Paul Reeberg, convener).
- Fire effects and fire/climate interactions in boreal forests (Dr. Sue Conard, convener).
- Fire management and the public: Understanding social issues of fire management at multiple scales (Dr. Sarah McCaffrey, convener).
- Fire mediated changes in the Alaskan boreal forest (Dr. Amy Lovecraft, convener).
- Fire regimes and fire effects in Mexican ecosystems (Dr. Ronald Myers, convener).

- Incorporating education and communications into fire management (Maureen Brooks, convener).
- Interactions of wildfire and insect outbreaks (Dr. Daniel Tinker, convener).
- LANDFIRE Project: Scientific foundations for multi-scale fire, fuels and risk assessments across the United States (Dr. Kevin Ryan, convener).
- Landscape fire and vegetation modeling: Current modeling efforts and management-oriented workshop (Dr. Bob Keane, convener).
- Liability, threatened and endangered species, clean water, and cultural resources: Issues and challenges (James Brenner, convener).
- NASA special session on wildfire observational science and applications (Vince Ambrosia, convener).
- Professional and community cooperation created after the 2003 wildfires in San Diego (Dr. Anne Fege, convener).
- Reports after the 2003 wildfires in San Diego County: What did we learn, and what have we done? (Dr. Anne Fege, convener).
- San Diego wildfires education project: From wildland fires to school curriculums (Dr. Stephen Barnes, convener).
- Weather and climate needs and requirements for wildland fire decision support (Samuel Williamson, convener).
- Wildfire impacts on invasive and threatened and endangered fishes and their habitats (Dr. John Rinne, convener).
- Wildland fire use in the United States: Building the future from 35 years of learning (Dr. Carol Miller, convener).
- Wildland fire decision support (John Szymoniak, convener).

STATEMENT OF INTENT –
THIRD INTERNATIONAL FIRE ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT CONGRESS:

Wildland fire management is a multi-faceted program. Its planning and implementation requires knowledge and experience in fire, ecology, and fuels, blended with an understanding of people and communities. The Fire Congress provides an opportunity for fire and land managers, scientists, resource professionals, agency administrators, local government representatives, consultants, reporters, educators, students, and the concerned public to learn from the specialists, and from each other. The Fire Congress allows us to learn about scientific developments; discover new technologies; exchange and build upon ideas; and explore the relevancy of problems, issues and solutions from other parts of the continent and the world.